CAFÉ CHANTANT HERE AT HOME

NEW YORK TRYING TO GET THE REAL PARIS ATMOSPHERE.

Actors and Actresses on Hand With Their Carefully Prepared Impromptu Bits of Entertainment—A Few Blond Typewriters (Stage Kind) to Help Along.

Between 11 and 12 o'clock every Thursday evening automobiles, hansom cabs, private broughams and even old fashioned hacks begin to discharge their freight at the door of the Studio Building at Fortieth street and Sixth avenue.

Uniformed attendants seem to spring out of the ground. Through the open doors a strain of the "Merry Widow" waltz floats to the pave and some newsboys with red woollen comforters about their throats execute a dance that has none of the seductiveness of that famous opera. Chiffon velvet trains sweep the sidewalks and chiffon scarfs are detached from coiffures with a bravery that puts grip and pneumonia to defiance.

All of which means that New York has started a café chantant in earnest. It is the outcome of Pleiades dinners, Senator Depew's speeches, vaudeville proclivities, and last but by no means least, the call of charity.

The man who has met the financial panic and is simply holding his own, which is club slang for saying that he is spending his evenings at home, gazes mournfully at the bonus required for the reservation of a table, which bonus is to go to the Actors' Fund Fair, and murmurs bitterly, 'Oh, Charity, Charity, what crimes are committed in thy name!" But he pays the bonus just the same, and when the waiter returns and brings him a quarter change he tells him to put that with the rest in the charity box, at which the waiter looks pleased, naturally. Did you ever see a waiter who wouldn't rather his tip went to the Actors' Fund than into his own pocket?

The Black Sheep looks about and mutters to his fair companion, 'Maxim's to the life."

"I've never been there," answers the Fair Companion, "but I have heard——"

"Not the truth, I hope," he says hurriedly. "I was young then and I have heard that Maxim's has never been the same since."

New York's café chantant is really, to the initiated, like the famous French restaurant with the Gallic license in restraint. There is music, orchestral and vocal, the art room with its famous ceilings painted by the mural decorator Martineau is reserved for the occasion, lights are softly tempered and there is no time limit.

Those who have been regular attendants at the café chantant since its inception say that it is perfectly possible for a man to get back home, have a tub and shave, meet his wife at breakfast with a perfectly innocent look, and reach his Wall Street office not more than an hour behind his usual time, and do all that without losing any of the numbers of the programme.

This programme has all the ease of a perfectly impromptu affair. It is the province of art to conceal art, and none listening to the songs, recitations and monologues would imagine that the various artists had ever allowed beforehand that they might possibly, for the good of the cause, forget for a moment their customary modesty and look an audience in the face without the feeling of security that comes with a makeup.

A NOTE FOR A SINGER.

For example, a very distinguished personage strolls in just before 11. It is quite early and the theatre crowd has not arrived, the patrons of the place represented by a few strollers and a few guests from receptions who have taken in the café chantant en route. The personage hangs his coat, lined with baby lamb and ornamented with sable collar, across a chair, where he can keep an eye on it, and loses himself in the contemplation of a lobster cotelette. He seems to have no other thought in the world, unless it is for the pretty girl with whom he flirts over her escort's shoulder.

At a table near by one of a quartet with a Hackensack accent says to her escort that he looks like an actor, and is perfectly triumphant at her perspicacity when the personage rises and with another glance at the girl begins to recite in a sonorous voice, which makes the snails curl up in their shells:

The lizard climbed a wall. He climbed it once.
He climbed it twice, then crawled away.

The bee sipped a flower. He sipped it once. He sipped it twice, then flew away.
The man kissed a maid. He kissed her once. He kissed her twice, then walked away.
The wall wasn't sunny. The flower had no honey.
The maid had no money. Funny?

"Isn't he horrid!" says the girl quite aloud to her escort. "I can't bear actors. They're so conscious."

"You prefer them unconscious?" says the youth, even louder than the girl has spoken, and patrons at neighboring tables laugh.

But the recitation and the conversation which it has evoked are all a part of the well arranged programme to keep early comers from getting impatient. All sorts and kinds of rumors fly about in this interval. It is said that Ethel Barrymore is to give a rendition of the "Hamlet" in the only way she thinks it should be played; that Maxine Elliott is going to do some coon songs in their original color, and that Lillian Russell will deliver a lecture on Christian Science.

Meantime the personage with the baby lamb, having caught a fleeting glimpse of the Society Snails, is moved thereby to respond to his encore by resurrecting the dear old story of the Philadelphia man in New York who complained that he had to come over here whenever he wanted this delicacy because there wasn't anybody over home who could catch them.

While this is receiving its due reward of attention the procession of theatregoers begins to straggle in. The person who knows everybody points out Daniel Frohman and his wife, Margaret Illington; Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Mackay, David Belasco and David Warfield, Charles Emerson Cooke, president of the Friars, who has brought a new joke; Mme. Gerville-Réache, who leads a contingent from the Manhattan Opera House in which one discerns the Happy Hammersteins; the Taylor Greens, R. C. Knowles, the Serious Lecturer who entertains a Carnegie Audience with Travelogues one day and the next appears in a slapstick rôle in vaudeville; Fred Niblo and Josephine Cohan.

Frank Keenan, who plays *Gen. Warren* in "The Warrens of Virginia," rises to his slim length and says that he would not be there addressing such a distinguished audience if it were not for his love of the Actors' Fund and that he had nothing to offer as reason for his appearance except his youth and beauty.

Mr. Keenan's gray hair and incipient lines carry off his little joke, and the café chantant patrons sip soup and wait impatiently for the next break in the monotony, which is furnished by a stout lady with sunrise colored hair and earrings of turquoise as big as marbles, who weeps loudly into the crabs à la Newburgh and explains to the head waiter that Mr. Keenan's voice is so beautiful that it makes her cry every time she hears it. She is soothed by her husband and some pink champagne.

There is a long, narrow table adorned with some flowers which has attracted a great deal of attention. There are various rumors flying about as to whom it is intended for. The proprietors, head waiters and business manager preserve a discreet silence, but one and all look anxiously toward the door from time to time.

The mystery is at length solved when Gus Edwards and his corps of blond typewriter girls file in, looking so innocent that they arouse suspicion. Immediately after their arrival the waiters begin to place incoming parties so that the masculine contingent sits facing the blond typewriters while the women of the party have their backs thereto. One woman insists on changing her seat after watching her companion's contortions of face for a few moments. He said he had neuralgia and she said that he was flirting, and while the dispute is being adjusted one of the blond T. W.'s, having fortified herself with three rolls and a dozen oysters, sings in a chirpy voice a tender little ballad which makes a plethoric looking gentleman of some seventy-odd years so red in the face with admiration that he has to be fanned with a napkin. He confided to the fanner that he had attended every performance of the Pleiades Club, but he had never heard anything like that.

Each one of the blondines has a turn at engaging public attention. The little one with a puggy nose, which makes her look like a toy dog, sings the most soul racking ballad in her répertoire after she has suitably fortified herself with three courses, and the tall one in black, who looks as if she had an unhappy love affair and didn't know what to do with it, warbles a boulevard ditty of the Mimi Pinson variety.

It takes considerable diplomacy for a college student, who has a face as open as a sun dial, to engage the attention of the feminine members of his own party, extract a flower from the centrepiece, put his card in the petals, call a waiter and get it into the possession of the special Blondine who has aroused his admiration without detection. There are several clever stunts of one kind and another performed at the café chantant, but none that really equals this for skill and coolness, although it is unheralded and unsung except by this modest tribute.

Another which runs it a close second is the work of a popular professional in vaudeville. He shows how it is possible to order a dinner from a waiter by pantomime and requests the proprietor of the restaurant to impersonate the part of the waiter. The proprietor hesitates a moment, thinking, perhaps, his own waiters may object, as he does not belong to the union, but the applause of the roomful finally determines him and he stands meekly at attention.

The artist goes through the motions of mixing a cocktail, his hands flying from bottle to bottle, until he has apparently a most appetizing combination. The proprietor-waiter is delighted at his work. Of course he knows what he wants. He flies to get it, pushing away a real waiter who is in his way. He brings it back triumphantly and the whole roomful applauds again while the artist drinks it. Then he goes through the pantomime of opening a bottle of wine, there is a popping of cork, the gurgle of the liquid, the bubbling of the fizz. Again a light of comprehension glows upon the owner's face. Again he flies. This time it is a small bottle of champagne, which the artist calmly drinks.

While all this is happening, a look about and an eavesdropping ear disclose little incidents which are not down on the programme but are fully as interesting.

A smart looking woman with a gown whose collar is as high as the one that Nazimova wears in "The Comet," with an orchid on her corsage and Mary Garden curves to her physique listens to a would-be compliment from her escort.

"You look just like *Thays*," he remarks, noting the resemblance to the famous prima donna.

"You mean *Tees*," she corrects him.

Another woman who has overheard this touching tribute explains to her escort that they must be going to be married if they are not already so. "No woman corrects a man's pronunciation or spelling until she is sure of him," she declares as one who knows. "I think she's wrong now," she adds. "I've always heard it called *Thize*, and that's what Mary Garden calls it when she sings. She ought to know, I should think."

At another table a theatregoer is asking the woman nearest him to tell him the name of the woman in "The Girl Behind the Counter." "The one that wore the spangled gown that made her look like a goldfish."

"Dresser," is the answer to this.

"Yes, I know she's a dresser, but I wanted to find out her name."

A little diversion is caused at one end of the room by a young man who is disputing the size of his bill until the waiter points out to him that it includes the price of four long stemmed tulip shaped liqueur glasses that the quartet, part of a well known pony ballet, have concealed in their muffs. The man pays the bill and asks the girls calmly if they don't think it would be safer to have the glasses wrapped up, and the girls say "no" with equal coolness, while they are really absorbed listening to the man at another table explain to his party that the reason they are called a pony ballet is not because they wear pony skin coats or ride Shetlands in the park mornings but because of their fondness for ponies of brandy.

Hitachiyama, the Japanese wrestler, takes the occasion to make his farewell speech to New York. He talks a lot about the President, but those who know say that his real allegiance has never wandered far from the Nip Club, and the way he looks at the ponies and the blondes would seem to give some truth to this report.

A story goes the rounds of the tables after he has finished of the early days when Hitch was taken to many a place of interest, and, following the only rule of hospitality in New York, received a great variety of thirst quellers.

After a while his guide mentioned to the Japanese boy who acted as interpreter that possibly he was introducing the chief to too many strange concoctions, and that he might ask him if they were being pushed along too rapidly to agree with his constitution. If so they would stop.

The statement was repeated to the mighty wrestler, and immediately his smile was magnified and multiplied a thousand times. He commenced to chatter volubly, where before his verbal utterances had been terse to the point of bearishness. He laughed. He rolled his fat sides. He went through various gestures typical of good cheer, and then, as near as the guide could gather from mental telepathy, his discourse covered the whole history of Japanese drinks from the introduction of saki to the importation of the American cocktail. He didn't run down until he was out of breath, and Hitch has good lungs. The guide was thinking of writing a book on what the interpreter would undoubtedly tell him.

The Japanese boy interprets with a bow, and a gesture to the gasping Champion:

"He say, ' ush 'em along.' "

That was all!

It is not all fun and frolic, however. Occasionally an actor with an artistic regard to the law of sun and shade breaks away from topical songs and boulevard jokes to tell a tear compelling story like that of the Italian workman who wanders into a florist's shop on Broadway to buy a rose for the grave of his wife and child and finds that they are $10 apiece to him, while for the woman who steps from a victoria a moment later they are $10 a dozen. The patrons of the café chantant have reached the stage by this time when tears are as easy as laughter

Others stroll in after them, of more or less celebrity in the social and theatrical world, and by 2 o'clock in the morning the fun, carefully edited from all Bohemian proclivities to suit its environment, is reaching a climax.

ALL RECOGNIZED THE CHAMPAGNE SIGN.

THE PATHETIC RECITATION.

GUS EDWARDS AND HIS FAIR HAIRED TYPEWRITERS.

MAKING JEWELRY BY HAND

LITTLE HEARD OF COLONIES OF FOREIGN WORKERS.

Persians Who Make Their Own Designs and Earn as Much as $12 a Week—Italian Silversmiths and a German Master of Gold—Not Artists, They Say.

"Practically all the handmade jewelry sold in the United States is made right here in New York," said a dealer in silverware. "When I say handmade I don't mean the arts and crafts sort, because for every arts and crafts piece sold we sell a hundred of the commercial handmade variety.

"There are about twenty-five of the crafts jewellers in the business. They call themselves artists and charge at the rate of $8 a day for their work. They are mostly women, too.

"The other fellows, the real things, we call them, are foreigners. Most of them can't even speak English. As for calling themselves artists, they never dream of it, but you ought to see their work."

A picturesque group of these foreigners is the Persian colony in West Hoboken. None of these Oriental craftsmen speaks English, but they will call in a smiling Persian of long name, but briefly known in West Hoboken as Charlie, to interpret.

"Oh, no. They not artists." Here a very broad smile from the interpreter. "They work. How much pay? That depend. Perhaps $12 a week when they work good.

"Yes, always by hand. How long in this country? Two, three, ten, twelve year, some. They all learn in Persia. Why they come? Perhaps they think they make more money. Who knows?"

The pay of $12 a week for a good workman explains the cheapness of the handmade jewelry sent out by the little colony. The filigree designs have to be made of 22 carat gold, and the stones are imported in the rough from Persia. Turquoise, lapis lazuli, malachite and topaz are largely used; the filigree work is best fitted for necklaces and bracelets. Prices range from $3 to $50,000, which Charlie proudly announces was the cost of a diamond necklace made for a New Yorker last year.

"The design? They make 'em. Where they get them? Out of their heads. Never two alike, and all out of the head.

"Yes, we copy when you like." Charlie points out a workman copying a bit of filigree work. "From Persia, 500 years old. They are making like it for a lady in New York. They copy when you say, but they like best to make out of the head."

Charlie's English is exhausted, though his smile is not, and if any of the other Orientals could aid him they do not. They are too busy to talk.

Perhaps the only foreign gold worker of his kind who is known by name to the jewellers is a German. He lives in New York, has been called the most remarkable metal worker in the United States and his pieces rank high in Europe. Yet he again does not call himself an artist and rarely signs his designs. A Fifth avenue firm has some fifty of his creations, and of these only one has the maker's signature.

"He's the most wonderful artist in gold I ever knew," declares a member of the Fifth avenue firm. "You hand him a jewel and he sees it in a design.

"A while ago we bought a large, oddly shaped baroque pearl. We didn't know what to do with it, so we turned it over to him. Now, see this," and the jeweller produced a mermaid with gold hair and tail, and torso of the pearl.

"Another of his feats is a peacock, the body of which is a freak twin abalone pearl. We had the stone for some time. Finally I decided it would be a peacock; but I couldn't make the bird stand right.

"The German came in one day. I showed him the pearl without saying a word. He looked at it a minute, nodded and asked for some wax, and in a short while there was the peacock model."

In carrying out his designs the German first makes a wax model, from which he fashions a plaster mould. With this he makes a rough gold casting which he carves down to its finished state.

While he designs and fashions all sorts of rings, fobs, brooches and ornaments, the German's delight is in animals. Cold snakes twine themselves around his fobs or carved eagles perch on his seals.

Tigers are among his best creations. All, whether crouching on seals or snarling on paper weights or peering around a ring setting, are modelled from a meek and harmless cat the German has owned and studied for many years. The models for his bears, eagles, snakes and peacocks reside in the Central Park Zoo.

They tell of a French bulldog done in bronze by him. After passing through several hands it came to the notice of the president of the Paris Kennel Club. He called upon the jewelry firm to find the maker of that bulldog.

"I must have the dog that was the model for that bronze. It was made from the most perfect French bull alive, and I must have that dog," exclaimed the Frenchman.

The jewelry firm sent for the German to inquire about his wonderful dog. He explained that there was none. He had merely made his bronze from his notion of what a French bull ought to be.

"And," concluded the jeweller in telling the story, "that man doesn't call himself an artist."

Another group of foreigners who do not pretend to be artists is the little band of Italian silversmiths who work under the direction of a fellow countryman. They live on the lower East Side and are literally unknown to the rest of the trade.

All their communication with the American world is through their boss, who himself has but slight command of English. From this little shop, up over several floors of cloak and suit establishments, comes what is said to be the best Etruscan and wire work done in this country

Some dealers say that the products of these workers excel those of the silversmiths in Italy. All the men employed here are Italians who learned the trade in their native country. Their story is almost identically that of the Persian colony in Hoboken.

"They think they can make more money in this country, so they come," you are told. Like the Persians, their designs are "out of the head," unless they happen to copy an antique.

Some of the best workers stay here only a few years, and then return to Italy, but soon drift back again. The man who has once worked in the shop is pretty sure to return.

"I do not send to Italy after them. Oh, no. They come back again. Why? The good men get $30," says the boss.

The possibility of earning $30 weekly draws the younger Italians into the trade, and often there are two or three apprentices in the shop. The good man who can get $30 is the one who makes his own designs. A mere metal worker gets only $12. It takes an artist to earn $30.

For the actual setting of stones French jewellers are employed. These, however, do not work in colonies like the Persians, or free lance, like the German gold artist. Each large American firm generally has several expert French stone setters in its employ. Unlike the other foreigners, their work requires technical skill largely, and they do not design.

The only other city with an art jewelry colony of foreigners is Philadelphia, where there is a small Persian group, like the larger one in West Hoboken.

TOO MUCH PUNCTUATION.

A Plea in Behalf of a Style of Writing That Requires But Little.

"Much punctuation," said an old instructor, "makes hard reading. Little makes easy reading. The first office of punctuation is to help make the words understood. Another is to convey impressions hard or impossible to impart by words.

"If you are able so to set forth your ideas in words that there is little need for the aid of punctuation you simplify the process of comprehension. If you are unable so to do you must ask your reader to pay attention to your punctuation. Thus you increase the task imposed upon him. Your ideas may be worth the effort on his part, but it would be for your advantage so to present them that they would not call for that additional effort.

"There are writers who employ marks of punctuation where their meaning would be as clear or clearer without them. This offends the intelligent reader."

Taking a book from his library the instructor turned to a passage in the preface and read:

" 'Now had he patiently waited [comma] but two years longer [comma] his death would have saved him [comma] the expense of separation [comma] and made his widow happy [comma] and perhaps proud to pay for an eternal riddance.'

"Throw away all the commas," said the instructor, "or if you please discard all but one and save that one for use between the first and second words, and the writer's meaning is unmistakable."

While taking down another book the instructor continued:

"There are writings that would be unintelligible without profuse punctuation. I have here the 'Analogy' of Bishop Butler. He has been commended as 'perhaps the man of greatest intellectual power in the English Church during the eighteenth century.' Yet there are now here in English literature examples of writing in which the author seems to have struggled more desperately with punctuation marks to make his meaning clear than did Bishop Butler in this great argument. For example, see this paragraph as punctuated in a standard edition:

"Christianity is the particular scheme under this general plan of Providence, and a part of it, conducive to its completion, with regard to mankind: consisting itself also of various parts, and a mysterious economy, which has been carrying on from the time the world came to its present wretched state, and is still carrying on, for its recovery, by a divine person, the Messiah.'

"I am not competent to fathom the meaning of the words and punctuation of that paragraph, but I infer that the writer meant to say that a part of the general plan of Providence conducive to its completion with regard to mankind is Christianity, which itself consists of various parts; and of a mysterious economy that has been carrying on from the time the world came to its present wretched state and is still carrying on for the world's recovery through a divine person, the Messiah. If that is the meaning the passage is sufficiently punctuated with two commas and a period.

"We are told that Bishop Butler rewrote the 'Analogy' many times, and it is easy to picture him in the midst of one of these rewritings making interpolations and elisions and trusting to punctuation for clearness of expression. If he had known that his work was to be immortal in ecclesiastical literature perhaps he would have deemed it worth while to rewrite it in a way to dispense with at least half and maybe three-quarters of the punctuation marks.

"There are no writings," the instructor went on, "in which clearness of meaning counts for more than in advertisements. These writings can hardly be termed permanent literature, but their meaning is clear when written by one who understands his business. He eschews punctuation almost entirely. In this he is greatly assisted by the use of tynes of various sizes and faces and by the arrangement of the lines. Bishop Butler could not have resorted to these expedients to get rid of punctuation marks, but no more could the skilful modern advertisement writer hold his job if he followed the Bishop's style of punctuation.

"My contention is that anybody of some literary skill who has anything in mind worth writing should be able so to set it down that his meaning will be unmistakable with very meagre punctuation. If he can do that he may forget most of the rules for punctuation put forth in the text books."